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WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Preparatory Committee
First session
Geneva, 9-13 September 1991
Agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8

AGENDA, RULES OF PROCEDURE, DATES, DURATION, VENUE OF AND PARTICIPATION AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

PREPARATIONS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, THE REGIONAL LEVEL AND THE NATIONAL LEVEL

STUDIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF FUTURE SESSIONS OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

Letter dated 13 September 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations Office and International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

As coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean Group on matters relating to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights, I hereby request that the annex to this Note be considered an official document of the first session of the Preparatory Committee.

The annex contains a set of ideas and proposals supported by all members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group which I outlined yesterday in my statement at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights.

(Signed) Horacio Arteaga
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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MAIN ITEM FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Efforts by the international community to protect human rights are related to the search for democracy and the defence of its institutions. Democracy coupled with development constitutes a favourable setting for the realization of human rights in an age marked by vertiginous change.

2. The Commission on Human Rights in paragraph 2 of the annex to resolution 1991/30 takes up this idea by requesting the Preparatory Committee, when preparing for the Conference, to keep in view "the equal importance and indivisibility of all categories of human rights as well as the interrelationship between human rights, democracy and development in full respect for the Charter of the United Nations".

3. Consequently, the Latin American and Caribbean Group supports the view that the main item on the agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights should be "Human Rights, Development and Democracy", and in the same vein considers that this theme should serve as the frame of reference for those items mentioned in General Assembly resolution 45/155.

STUDIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN

4. Human rights are universal and indivisible and, being indivisible, interdependent. The items indicated for study by the Secretariat, albeit of indisputable interest, are to a large extent of a legal orientation. They do not fully meet the expectations and positions of the Group with respect to the objectives of the Conference.

5. In the Group's opinion, the studies to be undertaken must strike a balance between legal, socio-economic and political aspects and therefore must be made in the light of the inescapable link between the legal aspects of human rights and the development of democracy.

6. For this reason the Group is giving serious consideration to the choice of studies and documentation to be prepared, and believes that the decision on what documentation should serve as the basis for the work of the Conference must be closely linked to the items on the agenda. Studies must reflect the mandate given in resolution 45/155, and the balance between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

7. The Group considers that regional and national meetings are essential to the success of the Conference. It has therefore resolved to support the offer by Costa Rica to provide the venue for the regional conference, as Costa Rica - as we all know - is committed to the cause of human rights.

8. The meeting in Costa Rica will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress achieved in human rights since the 1968 Tehran Conference and, on the basis of our experiences and specific circumstances, make the most substantive and effective possible contribution to the work of the World Conference, to which the Group naturally attributes the greatest importance.

9. Regional conferences are part of the preparations for the World Conference, according to the Group's interpretation of paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 45/155. Consequently, they should be included in the financial implications of the World Conference.

VENUE AND DURATION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

10. We are of the opinion that the second, third and fourth sessions of the Preparatory Committee should be held in Geneva, last two weeks each and be governed by the Rules of Procedure of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council. We think it appropriate to suggest that an additional week should be allowed for the fourth session, depending on the amount of work it will have to deal with.

OFFICERS OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

11. We consider that the current agreement, whereby the different offices of the Preparatory Committee rotate internally, is appropriate as it will give each region an opportunity to hold the different offices and give the Officers the great advantage of working as a team, which can only be beneficial.

AGENDA AND RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE CONFERENCE

12. We consider that the agenda and rules of procedure of the World Conference should be studied further, and propose that work on defining them should commence at the forthcoming session.